

BASCOM MALL
University of Wisconsin-Madison Campus
Madison
Dane County
Wisconsin

HALS WI-10
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

BASCOM MALL

HALS NO. WI-10

Location: University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin
Lat: 43.551036 Long: -89.640198

Significance: The buildings and landscape of Bascom Mall represent the earliest foundation of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Its design concept follows several precedents in American collegiate design including the College of William and Mary, the University of Virginia, and Yale University. From the time of its establishment, Bascom Mall has been a primary gathering and demonstration site for students and city residents. Today, Bascom Mall is the primary landscape space on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus.

History: The seven buildings that define Bascom Mall contribute to the overall scale and architectural character of the space. Main Hall, North Hall, South Hall, Music Hall, and Science Hall face east towards the Capitol, while the Law and Education buildings face inward towards the lawn. Two sidewalks run parallel to the buildings and are connected with perpendicular paths at three intervals. Although Bascom Mall ends at the foot of the hill, a visual axis extends through State Street connecting the University to the State Capitol.

In 1848, the Wisconsin State Legislature appointed a Board of Visitors to select a site for the State University. The selected site was the hill at the end of State Street. John Francis Rague arrived in Madison in 1849 to create the master plan. Construction began immediately with North Hall in 1851, South Hall in 1854, and Bascom Hall in 1859. Construction was halted until 1871, when the additional buildings were completed. Interior landscape elements on Bascom Mall strengthened the connection between the University and Capitol. In the early 1850s, some 700 elms were planted—a third of which died and were replanted within several years. In 1919 an exedra and terrace were constructed in front of Bascom Hall to display the Lincoln Statue that still remains a prominent feature of the Mall.

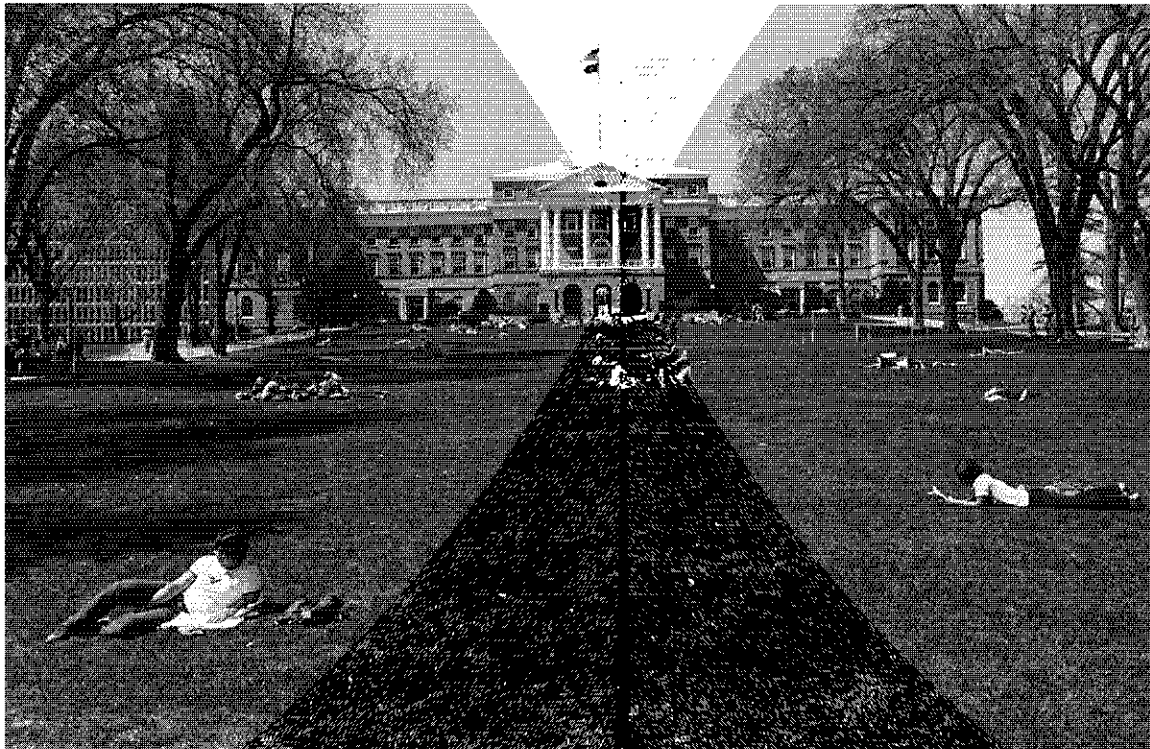
Originally known as “College Hill,” the mall was renamed in 1920 to commemorate John Bascom who had served as president of the University of Wisconsin from 1874 to 1887 and was highly regarded as an inspiration to students.

Sources: Carstensen, Vernon, and Merle Curti. 1994. *The University of Wisconsin: A History*, Vol. 3. "Politics, Depression, and War, 1925-1945." E. David Cronon and John W. Jenkins, eds. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Feldman, Jim. 1997. *Buildings of the University of Wisconsin*. Madison: University Archives.

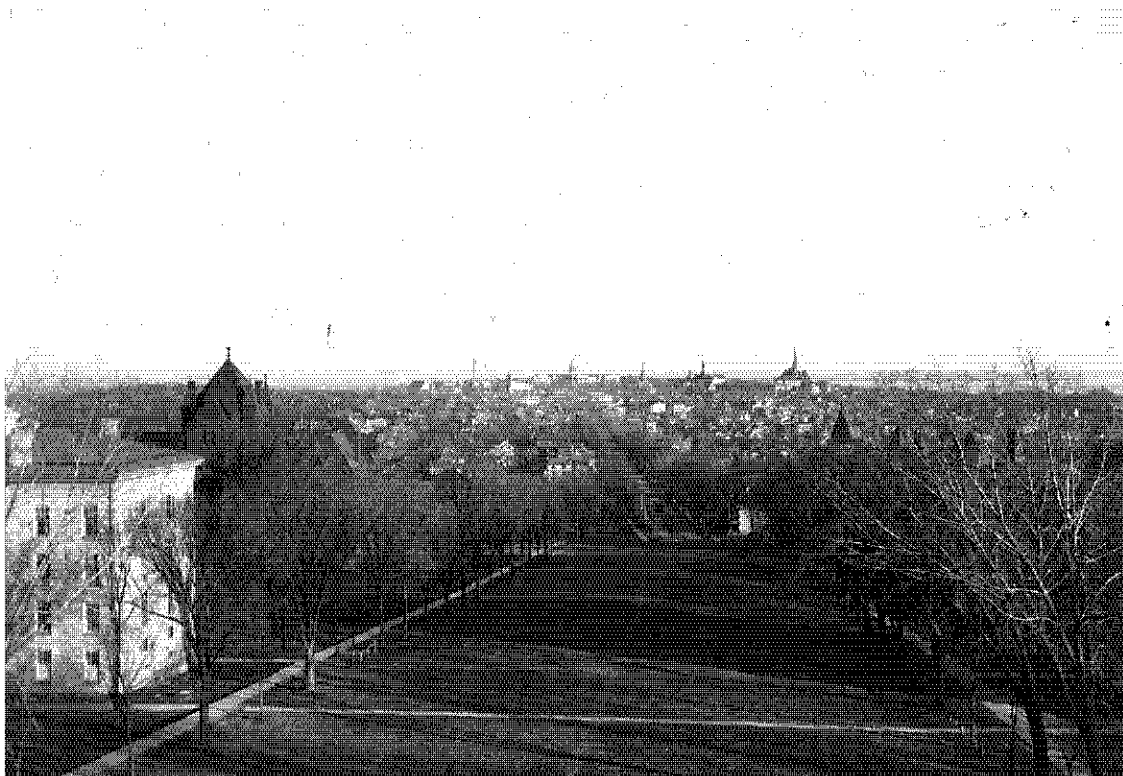
UW Madison Cultural Landscape Project. 2005. *Bascom Mall Cultural Landscape Inventory*.

Historian: Parisa Ford and Arnold Alanen, February 13, 2007
aralanen@wisc.edu



Bascom Mall and Bascom Hall, circa 1970-1979

(<http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/UW.UWCulturalLand.UW.CLP-A0009>. Accessed 2/13/07).



Bascom Mall looking east towards the Wisconsin State Capitol and the town of Madison, circa 1893-1896 (<http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/UW.UWCulturalLand.UW.CLP-A0004>. Accessed 2/13/07).